

Dear Sujata,

For some time I had an idea that you had something that worried you, or some doubt about something. You think of going to Thailand for a year, near the center of the Thai meditation teacher, because you believe that through practice one can get rid of kilesa as quickly as possible. Now, you have a thought that all of us have from time to time: (except of course the ariyan) we are advancing in years, and we do not know about our next life, will we have the opportunity to develop paññā again, so, should we not more or less hurry with the practice? What can we do now? I sympathize with your feelings.

You make already plans, thinking of how to live in Thailand. There is one thing: do we realize this moment now of thinking? There is a cetasika vitakka, thinking, arising with many cittas, kusala citta as well as akusala citta and other types as well. It has the characteristic of hitting or touching the object. Does it not hit, and hit, and hit now, all the time? If we are ~~neglect~~ not mindful of it as a conditioned nāma we are neglecting the Buddha's teachings, not profiting from the treasures of the teachings in full. We are so absorbed in the stories we are thinking, thus, the paññattis, concepts, and forget the citta itself. <sup>Then there is</sup> ~~that is~~ sloth and torpor, thina and middha.

This happens all the time when we plan, and when one thinks to go to a center, do this or that. No need to go elsewhere to have more sati. It depends on conditions where one is, anything can happen, at any time. What about your husband, does he like to go? You would have to follow rules, maybe reading is forbidden there. From what I hear I am afraid it is not natural life.

You could also go for a few weeks in order to see for yourself. I think it is quite a big step to leave your house for a year. I think one can stay in such a center, and the cost of living in Thailand is cheap. I had to laugh when reading what you eat, it sounds good! Do you eat egghoppers for breakfast? I could not help you with any association.

What are then the hidden enemies the teacher speaks about? When there is no awareness there are always hidden enemies around, because kilesas take on many different forms and make us even think they are friends, always luring us. Especially desire for result, a quick result. The teacher cannot give you the treasures of Dhamma, nobody else can do it for you.

Lokuttara citta cannot arise all of a sudden, insight has to be developed in stages, on and on, just now, not at some other time. Together with the lokuttara citta there is right concentration by conditions. If we try to have a lot of concentration first

and then become enlightened. Then there is bound to be the wrong kind of concentration, a hidden enemy again. If one is not mindful of akusala no way to become enlightened at all, akusala cannot be eradicated. But, when insight has been developed, all the stages, it may happen that lobha arises, but it can be realized as only a conditioned nama, not self, and then right after it lokuttara citta could arise. There is no rule at all of what reality one of the three characteristic must be realized just before enlightenment, it can be the impermanence, impermanence, the dukkha or the anattanness of lobha!

I feel you may not be inclined to Abhidhamma, that is of course very personal. We cannot be the same, people have different inclinations. But it would be a great support for satipatthana, one understands better what the object of awareness can be. One will be surer about the characteristics of realities.

I may not go to Thailand this year, it is possible that Khun Sujin has a trip in Europe.

You had a question to me: What was in your book that appealed so, so as to rouse me so far?

I learnt the Dhamma from Khun Sujin, Dhamma in daily life, and Abhidhamma in daily life, they are all realities which can be proven, if one develops understanding or insight. There are books with many terms, but the way Khun Sujin taught brought them all to life. It is not in the book, it is life. That I tried to render in my Buddhism in daily life and also in my book Abhidhamma in daily life. I think that you get that from my book, the directness, and that appeals to you. We like to learn about our own life, to understand ourselves more. To realize: in what direction are we going, what do we seek in life. How can the goal be reached. Through knowing realities as they naturally appear. It appealed to me, that understanding should be developed naturally, not forcing oneself and change one's life style. Not doing anything special, but getting to know one's kilesas. The getting to know is already a beginning of a cure, pañña does its work. Above all understanding should be stressed, because when there is pañña no need to think so much of effort, volition and concentration. The kilesas are anatta, it is not possible to just get rid of them quickly, they arise because they have been accumulated for aeons, they are conditioned. But it can be realized when they appear, they are not self. Seeing the uncontrollability, not controllability, that is wisdom. We may not attain enlightenment in this life, but <sup>what</sup> ~~was~~ once learnt is never lost. It will be accumulated and <sup>in</sup> another life it will appear. And then, is a moment of right understanding now, of our natural life, not a precious moment? It is valuable, just a moment of understanding now. Better to think of now than always of the future. With metta, Nina.

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Dear Dr. Wimalajeeva,

You find that in spite of reading and listening to the teachings you have not accumulated much sati and paññā. You find that you have only intellectual understanding of anicca, dukkha and anattā. You think that it is helpful for you to sit and concentrate on breathing and that this is a condition for the arising of sati of satipatthāna, which is aware of nāma and rūpa. Through mindfulness of citta you find that you can experience anicca, impermanence.

What is right awareness of the right object? What are the conditions for its arising? These are questions we talk a great deal about during the seminar in Sri Lanka. We all feel desperate now and then. Haven't we listened a lot, studied a lot. Where is the right awareness then? But is the self not in the center of everything while we ask ourselves these questions? We find it a shame for 'ourselves' that there isn't more sati. Can't we accept it that it develops, in its own tempo, maybe during countless lives? In Sri Lanka Khun Sujin and Phra Dhammadhara stressed time and again that it may take many lives before right awareness has been accumulated more.

What can be done in order that sati arises? Certainly not trying to sit and concentrate with the purpose of having more sati. That is desire, lobha. Listening, considering with patience, intellectual understanding. There are no other conditions.

What is the object of sati? Seeing, visible object, hearing, sound, thinking, hardness, softness, in short, the nāmas and rūpās which appear now. When do these objects have to be studied with sati? Only when sitting? Does it make any difference, whether seeing appears while sitting, lying down, standing or walking? There is seeing now, it experiences visible object. 'Study it, study it now,' Khun Sujin reminded us time and again. What about visible object? It appears now. It is that which is experienced through the eye-sense. We can call it colour or visible object. While we pay attention to shape and form, there is not seeing. But we are so used to 'seeing' people and things. That is not seeing, but the perceiving of concepts. When we understand intellectually that paying attention to shape and form is not seeing, it is a step in the right direction.

Seeing is an experience, it is nāma. Visible object is not nāma, it is rūpa. Seeing is a citta, and it only experiences visible object, that is its only function. Sati may arise with yet another citta, and it can be aware of seeing or of visible object, but of only one reality at a time. Many moments of seeing but no sati at all. Sometimes sati may arise with kusala citta and then there can be study of seeing as only the experience of visible object, or study of visible

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object which is only what appears through eyes, no thing in it, no person in it.

It seems that we 'join' seeing and visible object instead of knowing them one at a time. Are we sure when there is awareness of seeing and when of visible object? When of hearing and when of sound? When there are 'wholes', when we join them together, there is no awareness.

Khum Sujin said that we have to be courageous and find out whether there is awareness of seeing, or of visible object, or any other reality, or no awareness yet. It takes a long time before we know what right awareness is. We seem to spend a lot of time finding out first what sati is not.

It is impossible to be able to experience impermanence before one has realised the difference between nāma and rūpa through direct experience. Do we experience the arising and falling away of realities? The arising and falling away of what? Of seeing? Or of visible object? Or are we not sure what seeing is and what visible object is? How can we then experience the arising and falling away of either one of them?

We should not confuse the appearing and disappearing of realities with the experience of impermanence. Seeing appears, a moment later hearing appears, then after that there is thinking of a concept. We can notice that there are many different moments of consciousness and that they change all the time. Certainly it shows that there is no self, no moment which stays, but this is still intellectual understanding. We should not delude ourselves into thinking that this is the experience of arising and falling away, which is vipassanā paññā. Again, as it is also explained in the Visuddhimagga, there must first be a very precise, very clear knowledge of the difference between the characteristics of nāma and rūpa. If one tries to concentrate on citta, this is not the way to develop the vipassanā paññā which knows the impermanence of nāma and rūpa.

One cannot direct awareness to 'contemplation of citta'; awareness arises and it is aware of any reality which appears, be it nāma or be it rūpa. Neither can one direct citta first to samatha and then to vipassanā, as you have noticed yourself. Samatha is a way of kusala. If there is right understanding of the object of samatha and of the way to become calm, calmness can be cultivated and one is temporarily away from lobha, dosa and moha. Calmness has to be wholesome calmness, not calmness which accompanies lobha or moha and which is thus not real calmness. Right understanding of the object of samatha and calmness have to be emphasized; samatha is not a matter of trying very hard to concentrate. That can be lobha or dosa, not bhāvanā. One has to know oneself very well in order to be able to cultivate samatha. Otherwise one takes for samatha what

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is not samatha. One has to know exactly, very precisely when the citta is kusala, and when it is akusala. Thus samatha is very, very difficult. One may so easily delude oneself. One may sit for two hours or longer, but if there is no right understanding of the object of samatha and if one does not know one's citta, there is no samatha bhāvanā.

Mindfulness of breath is one of the most difficult subjects. It is not watching one's breath; at that time there is clinging. Don't we like our breath? Is there an idea of mine, it belongs to me? We find it so important. It can be viewed with right understanding. It is only breath, rūpa, conditioned by citta. Our life depends on it and when breath ceases, it is the end of this life. Why cling to it? The 'sign' of this subject is very difficult, since it is so subtle. And, as I said: wanting to watch is not mindfulness of breath.

For samatha right understanding is necessary. For vipassanā right understanding is necessary; but the type of right understanding in vipassanā is different from the right understanding in samatha. The object which is known in vipassanā is different from the object known in samatha. In vipassanā the object is a nāma or rūpa which appears right now. Therefore, how can a moment of samatha be preparation for vipassanā? The right understanding of samatha cannot change into right understanding of vipassanā. But the calmness of samatha can be object of awareness in vipassanā, since everything can be object of awareness in vipassanā.

It is not said in the scriptures that one has to cultivate samatha first or that one has to sit. Many monks were used to sitting and cultivating samatha, even before the Buddha's time. That is why we read about sitting. But the Buddha also said that they should be mindful no matter what they were doing, eating, talking, awake, falling asleep, etc.

You may still wonder what can be done to have sati, to know seeing and visible object. When we keep on thinking and doubting what seeing is, there is no awareness of seeing, but, what appears? While we are worrying and while we have doubts about awareness, about nāma and rūpa, are there no realities appearing? No rūpas, no feelings, no other nāmas? We find it not so interesting to be aware and study at such moments, since we set our mind on seeing, visible object, hearing or sound. We have heard about these realities and now we think we should direct sati just a little towards these realities. That is not the way. If there is awareness of whatever nāma or rūpa appears without naming it, it can be the beginning of paññā. And it can be a condition for sati to be aware also of seeing and visible object. We should not plan anything, but we still do. 'It is craving which leads us away from the present object,' Khun Sujin said. The present object is not as we want it to be. We are impatient.



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Is it useless to be in the shrine-room? No, paying respect to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha is kusala. But we should not think that there is bhāvanā all the time. There are very few kusala cittas in a day compared to the many akusala cittas. Kusala citta may or may not be accompanied by right understanding. When kusala citta is not accompanied by right understanding it is not bhāvanā. Kusala citta is difficult, and kusala citta accompanied by right understanding is difficult, we should not think that it occurs often. Sitting will not induce right understanding. The time in the shrine-room can be used by reading from the scriptures and listening to the tapes as you do already. When we pay respect the kusala citta may be on the level of sīla. When there is right understanding of calmness and how to develop it, there can be moments of samatha. But we should not mislead ourselves into thinking that it is easy. At any time, if we do not plan it, there can be mindfulness of a nāma or rūpa which appears, as only an element, not self. If only one reality appears, seeing, not mixed with a person for example, not mixed with visible object, there is sati. Don't we often mix up realities? Are we sure when feeling appears, when lobha appears, when the citta accompanied by lobha appears? They each have their own characteristic.

We should have patience, we should be contented that there is 'study', not yet vipassanā paññā. We should 'let sati arise', as Khun Sujin so often says, not forcing it. We will see that we can be contented being in any place, wherever we happen to be by conditions. In some texts the Buddha spoke about the forest, to those monks who were there already, by conditions. In many other texts he told the monks that it does not matter whether one is in the forest or near a village. We should read all those texts with right understanding, otherwise we are bound to give them a wrong interpretation. We should be contented with whatever reality appears and be aware of it. When there is mindfulness there is contentment. We do not try to change the situation, there are only nāma and rūpa. It does not make any difference what posture we take. It is all the same.

We read in the 'Gradual Sayings', Book of the Tens, Ch. VII, par. 6, Weal and Woe, that the wanderer Sāmandakāni asked Sariputta what is 'weal' and what is 'woe'. Sariputta said:

Your reverence, when there is discontent this woe may be looked for: Whether one goes, stands, sits, or lies, he reaches not happiness and pleasure; whether he has gone to the forest, to the root of a tree, to a lonely place, to life in the open air, to life amid the monks, he reaches not happiness and pleasure. Where there is discontent, this woe may be looked for.

Where there is content, your reverence, this weal may be looked for: Whether one goes, stands, sits or lies, he reaches happiness and pleasure. Whether he has gone to the forest, to the root of a tree, to a lonely place, to a life in the open air or life amid monks, he reaches happiness and pleasure.

Where there is content, your reverence, this weal may be looked for.